

# Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

2 November 2021

## Funding for Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester

### 1. Contacts

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### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Cabinet recommends to Council the continuation of funding to Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester for the provision of infrastructure support to the voluntary and community groups and charities in Chichester District as set out in para 5.2 below.**
- 2.2 **That the Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Housing and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Services, to agree a service specification and signing of a three-year funding agreement and delegates to the Grants and Concessions Panel the annual monitoring of performance.**

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Chichester District Council (CDC) recognises the importance of a successful and resilient voluntary and community sector made up of charities, social enterprises and community groups that support residents, particularly those who are more vulnerable. CDC has historically funded support to ensure that the organisational and development needs of the sector are met. This is achieved by funding the local 'infrastructure support' organisation.
- 3.2 In the Chichester District, the service is delivered by Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester (VAAC). VAAC is a registered charity managed by a Board of local Trustees. VAAC was formed in 2012 following a merger of the voluntary and community sector support organisations that served Arun and Chichester. VAAC is a membership organisation led by and answerable to local groups. They currently have 160 member organisations from Chichester District, and a further 106 members who work across Chichester and Arun Districts. Their regular bulletins are circulated to a much wider audience.
- 3.3 The service is currently under a funding agreement that ends in March 2022. This was a three year agreement which has seen significant changes and challenges for the voluntary and community sector. Many local member groups received

support from VAAC to respond to the consequences of the Covid19 pandemic, with impacts to service demand, staff and volunteers, and income. VAAC's different services are normally provided on an outreach basis, through one-to-one sessions, telephone advice, a training programme, network meetings and online support. Support was offered throughout lockdowns via virtual options but in person options are now reintroduced.

- 3.4 During lockdown, VAAC were part of the WSCC COVID weekly meetings and worked closely with the local community hub, offered support to local aid groups and people wanting to volunteer. They have networked with others to identify opportunities to coordinate to better help people – e.g. emergency food access. There has been much closer working between CDC and VAAC in the Covid response. Their performance supporting groups and volunteers in Chichester District is monitored quarterly, with an annual report presented to the Grants and Concessions Panel (GCP). The GCP has been satisfied with performance historically and throughout the current funding period, most recently at the meeting of January 2021.

#### **4. Outcomes to be Achieved**

- 4.1 Continued support for the key 'infrastructure' needs of the voluntary and community sector in the Chichester District. The three year grant funding is intended to ensure the service can plan, in challenging times, to respond to increasingly diverse demand and ensure the continued availability of:

- Governance advice – so that groups are able to manage themselves in accordance with appropriate guidance and the District is well-served by confident, well run organisations.
- Volunteer recruitment assistance – the value of volunteering is recognised, that people interested in finding opportunities are helped to find vacancies and groups are supported to advertise and create local opportunities.
- Training –delivered in response to the needs of local groups, also providing opportunities to gain expertise in new areas.
- Fundraising guidance – groups are successful in attracting funding to support their services from a range of different sources and are able to adapt to new opportunities.
- Networking and peer support opportunities for similar local organisations - groups are strengthened through mutual support. Partnership working is facilitated to avoid duplication and share knowledge.

- 4.2 Funding for VAAC comes from a range of sources and the commitment of CDC is seen as valuable in securing the commitment of funding from other partners.

#### **5. Proposal**

- 5.1 Under the current contract, CDC contributes £47,600 'core funding' to VAAC. Arun District Council also funds the service and has confirmed their intention to continue their support (Agreement expires March 2025, value £51,373 in 2021/22). WSCC have, since 2019, funded an Alliance formed of VAAC and their three equivalents across West Sussex. This funding is also up for renewal, but demonstrable local support for the services is key to securing this further contribution.

- 5.2 It is proposed that funding of £51,000 (maintaining the current value of the funding plus an inflation allowance) is confirmed to VAAC for a period of up to three years. A Funding Agreement will again be offered and provide a monitoring framework for both regular review with officers and annual reporting to the GCP.

## **6. Alternatives Considered**

- 6.1 Funding for this support could be discontinued, however the voluntary and community sector face increasing demand to sustain or increase the services they provide to the local community. Fundamentally the infrastructure support provided is essential to the “health” of the sector which has seen significant pressure during the pandemic, and is support that might otherwise be expected from CDC.
- 6.2 Historically a number of mechanisms for funding this service have been followed, including receiving funding from WSCC to locally fund a service. The current arrangement allows for clear monitoring regarding how this Council’s money is used for service delivery in the District.
- 6.3 Given the value over the next three years, commissioning a service has been discounted. VAAC is a membership organisation made up of a significant proportion of the voluntary and community sector operating within the District. VAAC is separately funded by Arun District and West Sussex County Councils to deliver complimentary services, and is therefore uniquely placed to continue delivery of this service.

## **7. Resource and Legal Implications**

- 7.1 Funding for the service of £51,000 per annum is within base budget with an inflationary increase for 2022/23 (subject to the Council’s approval of the budget in March 2022). Annual renewal of the funding would be subject to Council’s approval of the budget.
- 7.2 Monitoring arrangements for this funding would continue within existing resources, and reporting to the GCP forms part of the annual work of the Panel.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 The GCP has received annual reports regarding the performance of VAAC and have historically been supportive of their work and activities, most notably at the January 2021 meeting where the activities of VAAC during the pandemic were summarised. A version of this report has been considered at the GCP of 21 October 2021 and their recommendation will be verbally updated to Cabinet.

## **9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks**

- 9.1 WSCC is yet to make a formal decision about the allocation of their funds for voluntary and community sector infrastructure support, but an award to the Alliance is predicated on the existence of the local delivery organisations (including VAAC). This Council’s funding commitment will support local community and voluntary organisations who are then able to help residents to make a difference in their communities.

- 9.2 The impact on the community is deemed to be positive as support will be provided to voluntary organisations to continue their work.

## 10. Other Implications

<b>Are there any implications for the following?</b>		
If you tick "Yes", list your impact assessment as a background paper in paragraph 13 and explain any major risks in paragraph 9		
	Yes	No
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>		X
<b>Climate Change and Biodiversity</b>		X
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact</b> Positive - Within the current funding period, VAAC have undertaken work to identify underrepresented communities and any emerging community groups that have not previously accessed their services.	X	
<b>Safeguarding and Early Help</b> Positive - part of the role of the service to support training in Safeguarding for local community groups and charities	X	
<b>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</b> Funding Agreement will cover responsibilities under GDPR	X	
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b> Positive - support and guidance from a trusted organisation will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of many groups' beneficiaries	X	
<b>Other</b>		

## 11. Appendices

11.1 None

## 12. Background Papers

12.1 None